Bugeye *Louise Travers*
Calvert Marine Museum
Intersection of Routes 2 and 4
Solomons
Calvert County
Maryland

HAER No. MD-55

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

FIELD REPORT

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

HAER MD, 5-SOLOM, 1-

Bugeye LOUISE TRAVERS

HAER No. MD-55

Rig/Type of Craft:	Bugeye	
Trade:	Oyster dredging/freight	
Official Number:	141457	
Principal Register Dimensions:	Length: 70.0 feet Beam: 19.5 feet Depth: 5.7 feet	Gross tonnage: 32.43 Net tonnage: 25.54
Location:	Vessel was last located at Calvert Marine Museum at the intersection of Routes 2 and 4 in Solomons, Calvert County, Maryland.	
Date of Construction:	1896	
Designer/Builder:	James T. Marsh, Solomons, Maryland	
Present Owner/Use	Vessel destroyed in 1986.	
Significance:	The bugeye LOUISE TRAVERS was the last surviving bugeye built by James T. Marsh, a Chesapeake Bay building who is credited with developing the stern "duck tail" or "box" which enclosed a bugeye's rudderstock, thus protecting it from collision with other vessels in crowded harbors. His development was widely adopted in the Bay area. Though much altered from her original appeArance, this vessel was recorded because her hull construction was though to be representAtive of Marsh's frame hull construction methods.	
Author:	Richard K. Anderson, Jr. March 1991	

Preface. In the course of documenting the *Louise Travers*, neither HAER nor Calvert Marine Museum ("CMM") were able to fund their desired historical investigation into this vessel, her builder, owners, crews, service life and modifications, or her place in Chesapeake Bay history with an analytical comparison made to other builders and similar vessels. However, the following data are provided as a sketch of her service life and chain of owners. An attempt is also made to trace the history of changes aboard her through the physical evidence discovered aboard during the recording process.

A Brief History of the Bugeye *Louise Travers*

According to an article titled "The Return of the Bugeye *Louise Travers*" appearing in the Winter 1984-85 edition of the Bugeye Times, James T. Marsh began to build bugeyes in 1879 and continued building them for over 20 years at his shipyard on Mill Creek near Solomons, Maryland. Marsh was reputed to be the first builder to use plank-on-frame construction for bugeyes instead of the more traditional log or "chunk" construction, and by 1986 the *Louise Travers* was the sole surviving bugeye attributable to him.[1] Most of the following notes on the *Travers* are compiled from file information CMM provided to HAER in 1986. These files were written by Paul L. Berry, a volunteer librarian at CMM.

In a memorandum "for files" dated June 14, 1985, Mr. Berry recorded the results of his research on four vessels in three volumes of "Master Carpenter Certificates, Crisfield, Maryland [1882?-1900?]" at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. His notes on the *Travers* were as follows:

> Louise Travers: Built in summer and fall of 1896 by James T. Marsh. She was delivered on October 14, 1896, to Capt. B.F. Travis [sic]. Her keel was 58 feet, beam 18'-6", and depth 4'-4".[2]

The figures from these documents appear to conflict with official registration dimensions and with measurements made by HAER in the field. How much of this conflict could be traced to methods of admeasurement has not been investigated. In 1947, the official length of the *Travers* was changed from 70.0 feet to 68.6 feet. Again, it has not been investigated whether this apparent change in length was due to changes in admeasurement methods, how these methods were applied to the vessel, or whether the vessel's actual physical length was altered resulting in the differing admeasure-

ments. In 1986 HAER measured the *Travers'* keel at 63'-3" from toe to end of skeg; the keel timber measured about 61'-2", subtracting for the length of the welded steel skeg.

A fairly complete chain of title appears below:

1896-1911	Homeport: Crisfield, Maryland Owners: not determined As originally built, *Louise Travers* served as an oyster dredging boat and required a crew of six.
1912	MVUS (listing in Merchant Vessels of the United States) missing
1913-1918 1919	Homeport: Baltimore, Md. MVUS missing
1921	Homeport: Crisfield, Md.
1929-1939	Homeport: Crisfield, Md. Owner: Henry W. Ward, N. Somerset Ave, Crisfield
1930	Vessel was modified to become an oil screw freighter with a 36 horsepower engine. Thereafter she was operated by a crew of two. Why the modifications were made, who performed the work, and what other changes were made to her hull and superstructure at this time have not been investigated. The maker of the engine has not been determined.
1940	MVUS missing
1941-1945	Homeport: Crisfield, Md. Owner: Norma Ward, Crisfield
1946	Homeport: Crisfield, Md. Owner: Maurice E. Ward, Crisfield
1947	Homeport: Crisfield, Md. Owner: Mallory S. Stant [Crisfield?] Length of vessel changed to 68.6 feet
1948	140 horsepower gas engine installed in vessel. Who performed the work and why was not investigated. The maker of the engine was not determined.
1955-1962	Homeport: Newport News, Virginia Owner: William H. Bailey, Newport News

1963-1965 Homeport: Cape Charles, Virginia
Owner: Eddie Lewis, Cape Charles

1966-1967 MVUS missing

1968-1971 Homeport: Cape Charles, Virginia
Owner: Gladys G. McCready, Cape Charles

1972-1978 Homeport: Crisfield, Md.
Owner: Raymond Chelton Evans, Crisfield

1978-1984 Homeport: Washington, DC
Owner: James Byus

The vessel served as a vegetable stand at the Maine Avenue fish market in Washington, DC. From photos taken of her by Paula J. Johnson of CMM in 1984[3], a large deckhouse with a shed roof was erected over the main hatch between the wheelhouse and foremast. The starboard side of the deckhouse was set upon the log rail, but some deck space was left outboard of the port side of the deckhouse.

1984-1986 Homeport: Solomons, Md.
Owner: Calvert Marine Museum

In 1984, Mr. Byus made a gift of the *Travers* to the Calvert Marine Museum, and she was towed to Solomons by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources tug *Big Lou*, arriving in Solomons on October 3.[4] The *Travers*' condition was deemed too deteriorated to restore, so CMM made plans to document her. The Historic American Engineering Record was enlisted in the documentation effort in 1986, and she was burned at Calvert Marina on October 21, 1986 after field measurements of her hull were completed.

Observations of Vessel History Deduced from Physical Remains

Production of the field work and measured drawings of the *Louise Travers* revealed numerous clues to the vessel's use, repair and modifications history. While these clues and the relationships among them do not reveal precise dates of changes, some bracketing or reasonable inferences about dates can be drawn from their analysis. Most of the field work was done after the vessel had been hauled for the last time, cut into three segments, and transported to a burn yard for final disposal.

The upper stem is an obvious replacement, since the top of this timber would not extend above the bulwarks if it predated the bowsprit. With the bowsprit in place, the stem would have ended near the sheer line. In sheet 8 of the measured drawings, this replacement is annotated. Note should also be made of the offset in the rabbet line at the joint between the upper and lower stem pieces; this was observed in the field. Ordinarily the rabbet would be fair through such joints.

The major openings in the main deck--the aft cabin opening and the hatch(es)--appear to be original construction. Referring to HAER drawing sheet 9, the shape in plan of the deck opening over the engine room is like that of cabins shown in numerous deck plans of bugeyes.[5] The half-beams are let into the carlings in a manner that suggests the carlings were not hastily installed just to make a deck opening for the engine room. Rather the old cabin was removed, and the ready-made opening used for engine room headroom beneath the newly mounted wheelhouse, an adaptation of minimal expense. The central section of the forward deck beam of the cabin opening was removed, and the beam ends supported on stanchions which both extended the engine compartment amidships and provided structure to which a bulkhead could be attached (see HAER drawings 7, 9, and 11 and HAER photo MD-55-25). It is plain from HAER drawing sheets 9 and 10 that the *Travers* was originally built with two hatches. Notice the difference in how the half-beams are let into the carlings in the two areas designated "original hatch" as opposed to the open area between them. It is apparent that at some point the deck between the hatches was opened up, the deck beams in this area cut and drifted to new hatch coamings, which were in turn scarphed into the original hatch coamings (see HAER drawing sheets 7 and 8). The new coamings carried the deck loads in the newly opened area to the original hatches, since the carlings in the newly opened area were mere segments which did not act as continuous beams.

Just ahead of the engine room opening in the main deck under the wheelhouse HAER discovered the remaining outline of an octagonal hole (see HAER drawing sheet 9, note 6). Being that this outline was the same size and shape as the foremast hole, it seemed fair to conclude that the mainmast was originally located here. No mast partners survived beneath the deck; they very likely were removed when the engine compartment was extended. The deck beam just ahead of this hole had a rabbet cut into the top aft edge. It was 25 1/4" long athwartships, 3" high (top to bottom) and 3 1/4" wide--strong confirmation for the former existence of mast partners which would have been let into the beam at this rabbet.

HAER was unable to determine if any of the main deck planking were original. Given the age of the vessel, the decking has probably been replaced at least once in the vessel's life. Some inferences about its age may be drawn from some structural conditions. For example, the mainmast hole discussed above most

certainly would have been replaced out of existence had the decking here been replaced since the installation of an engine and the wheelhouse. In addition, it is hard to imagine a vessel owner spending the money to disconnect and lift the entire wheelhouse in order to install continuous new planking under it. While the wheelhouse may have been built in the 1930s when the first engine was installed in the *Travers*, the wheelhouse also may have been added later. During field work, HAER found no evidence in the deck planking of a pattern of butt joints ahead or abaft the wheelhouse, or any obvious contrasts between new and old woods indicating that new decking was installed all around the wheelhouse, but not under it. This argues that the decking aft may have been at least 56 years old.

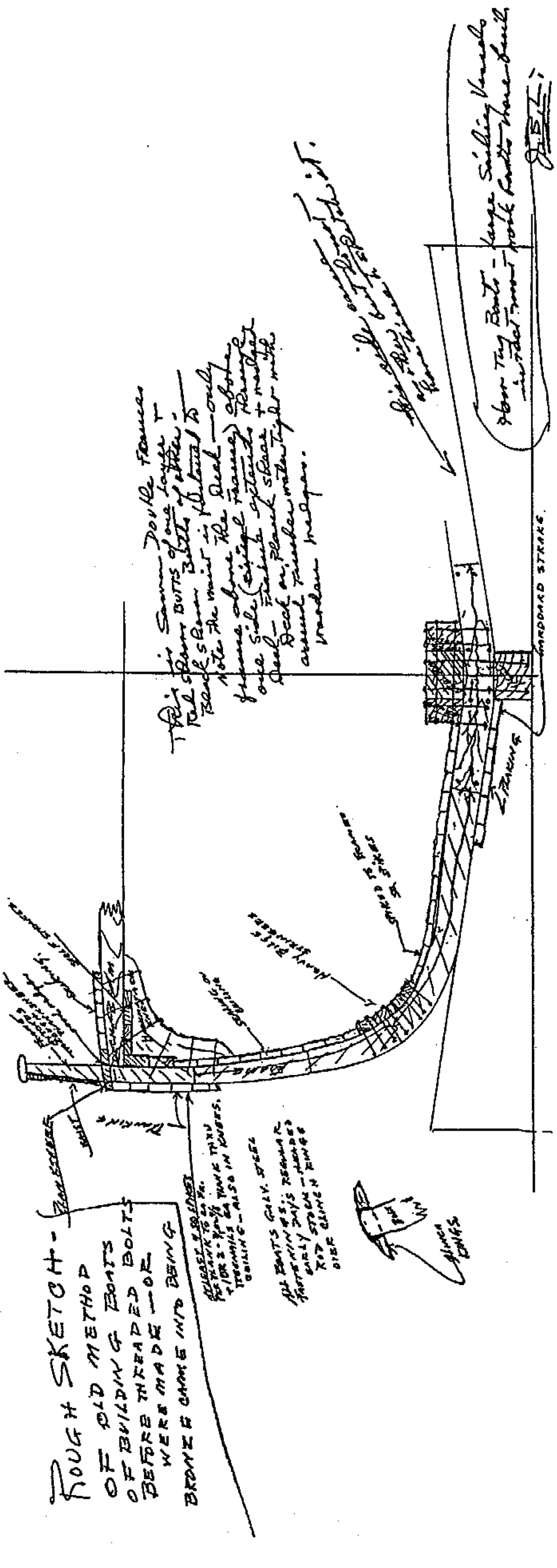
The bow area showed the most deterioration and repairs. From the number and types of dutchmen installed (including flattened coffee tins nailed over holes on the starboard side--a feature recorded in the field notes but not included in the HAER drawings), the owners of the *Travers* were spending as little money as possible in the vessel's later years to keep the deck watertight. Indeed, at the time of HAER recording the vessel's deck was sheathed in two or even three layers of plywood (removed before field measurements were begun) as a cheap alternative to replacing planks and caulking seams (see HAER photos MD-55-1 through 6). Of interest to the HAER team was the discovery of a glass prism or deck light in the port bow after flaking paint and some roofing tar were removed from the deck (see HAER drawing sheets 9 and 10, note 11). This appears to have been the only light source for the forecastle other than the door through the bulkhead from the hold below. No remnants of electrical wiring, conduit, or fixtures were discovered in the forecastle when it was dismantled for recording, or in the forebody ashes after the vessel was burned. Also absent in the forecastle were any signs of a breasthook at or above the clamps. There was a 1" diameter steel tie rod (see HAER drawing sheet 8, note 30) below the clamps which may have been installed as a replacement for a breasthook.

Reducing hull maintenance and preventing leaks was surely the motivation for sheathing the hull of the *Travers* in tarpaper and galvanized steel sheet metal. Keeping water off wooden planking and away from leaky caulking may have been viewed as less labor intensive and expensive than maintaining a wooden hull exposed to the water. Much of the metal had corroded through at the floating water line, however, and while no independent written data was found which established when the sheathing was put on, it may have been no more than ten to fifteen years old. Many of the hull planks appeared to be fairly sound when they and the sheathing were removed in selected locations to get at construction details.

The ceiling of the *Travers* was in extremely bad condition. A sketch made in the early 1970s by Solomons shipwright J. Barnes Lusby[6] (see appendix) shows that heavy bilge stringers were

routinely incorporated into boats' ceilings, but no such streaks were in evidence aboard the *Travers*. Perhaps they had deteriorated so much that the increased thickness was no longer uniform and readily detectable, or they had been replaced at one point. HAER drawing sheets 7 and 8 show only what was found in 1986.

During field work on the midbody of the vessel, clues were sought for the existence of a centerboard trunk and centerboard. The addition of a fourth floor in eight of the midbody frames suggests that they were reinforcements for frames in which no other floors were continuous over the keel, the reason being that a centerboard existed in this area. Indeed the aftmost floors in the aftmost frames in the forebody and midbody sections were noted in both field notes and photographs as having butt joints at the vessel centerline, but there were no gaps in these joints suggestive of a space for a centerboard. However, HAER had no means to remove the keelsons over the frames in the vessel in order to examine the frame construction in detail over the keel. The labor to lift the overburden of collapsed decking in the midbody and the size of the keelsons precluded verifying this important detail. The keelsons were sufficiently wide, and the intercostal spaces filled with enough debris that not even hand examination of all the frames at the vessel centerline was feasible, nor would it have provided decisive clues since the inner futtocks of the frames would have been inaccessible. Had a centerboard trunk existed, it was curious that no drift holes, sockets or other joinery details remained behind on the deck beams spanning the hold in the hatch. The centerboard trunk would have been fastened to the deck beams for structural support. It may be that the entire midbody was opened up at some time and the frames, keel, and keelsons almost completely replaced upon the removal of the centerboard trunk, but without independent documentary evidence, the physical clues remaining in the *Traver's* hull were inconclusive.



J.B.L. [J. Barnes Lusby], freehand sketch drawn for the Calvert Marine Museum, "Rough sketch of old method of building boats before threaded bolts were made--or bronze came into being", from the boat files, Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons, Maryland. Reproduced by permission of the Calvert Marine Museum.

NOTES

1 Berry, Paul L. "The Return of the Bugeye Louise Travers,' Bugeye Times 9, No. 4 (Winter 1984-85):3.

2 Berry, Paul L. [memorandum] for files, June 14, 1985, Subject: Research at National Archives. Louise Travers (B-L5) Wm. B. Tennison (B-W1) Boats-Misc. (B-b2). Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons, Maryland.

3 Photographs of Louise Travers by Paula J. Johnson, photographic collections, Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons, Maryland.

4 Berry, Paul L. "The Return of the Bugeye Louise Travers" (op. cit.).

5 Brewington, M. V., Chesapeake Bay Log Canoes and Bugeyes. Cambridge, Maryland: Cornell Maritime Press, Inc., 1963. See Plates XIV-A, XV-A, XVI-B, XVI-C, and XXIV.

6 J.B.L. [J. Barnes Lusby], "Rough sketch of old method of building boats before threaded bolts were made--or bronze came into being," early 1970s. From the boat files, Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons, Maryland. Copy included as appendix.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

Author unknown, various untitled files containing chains of ownership and homeports for the *Louise Travers*. From the boat files at Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons, Maryland.

Berry, Paul L. [memorandum] for files, June 14, 1985, Subject: Research at National Archives. Louise Travers (B-L5) Wm. B. Tennison (B-wl) Boats-Misc. (B-b2). From the boat files at Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons, Maryland.

Berry, Paul L. "The Return of the Bugeye *Louise Travers*," Bugeye Times 9, no. 4 (Winter 1984): 3.

Brewington, M.V. Chesapeake Bay Log Canoes and Bugeyes. Cambridge, Maryland: Cornell Maritime Press, Inc., 1963.

Johnson, Paula J., photographs of *Louise Travers*, 1984, photographic collections, Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons, Maryland.

J.B.L. [J. Barnes Lusby], freehand sketch drawn for the Calvert Marine Museum, "Rough sketch of old method of building boats before threaded bolts were made--or bronze came into being", From the boat files, Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons, Maryland.

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

The assistance of many staff members of the Calvert Marine Museum in compiling this brief set of data pages is gratefully acknowledged by the author. Dr. Ralph E. Eshelman (former director, CMM) provided copies of many of the museum's research files on the *Louise Travers* when the Historic American Engineering Record began documenting the vessel. Paula J. Johnson and Paul L. Berry reviewed the HAER drawings by mail and answered numerous research and reference questions by telephone. Jimmy Langley, James L. "Pepper" Langley, and George Surgent reviewed the measured drawings at various stages of development and provided many useful comments. Finally, thanks go to David W. Dillion of Rockport, Maine who graciously reviewed the entire HAER measured drawing set and whose detailed criticisms measurably improved the documentary content and notes in the measured drawings in many small but important details.

Richard K. Anderson, Jr., March, 1991